



Jim Carroll

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Why so glum, chum?

It's a positively depressing time to be in the HiTech industry, isn't it?

Venture capitalists don't return your calls, the market is in a funk, stock options are, well, not an option. TV reporters crow about the fact that another dot-com retailer has shut down. Newspapers trumpet the end of the e-biz revolution.

If you take all this to heed, the forecast for IT careers seems absolutely dismal. It's a miserable time to be thinking about technology, the Internet, or e-commerce. Fibre optics? Forget it — investors have soured on that idea. As for manufacturing hardware, what a loser business that is ... share prices have collapsed.

Layoffs. Recession. Depression. It's enough to make you want to pull out an old copy of DOS and retreat to the safety and sanity of HiTech circa 1982; a world before the Internet came along and ruined everything.

I think this calls for a reality check.

As you assess your future, there's one important thing to keep in mind: the media never reports on reality. If

you want to understand what is going on around you, listen to what the media says, then realize the real truth is likely to be the exact opposite. And whatever you do, don't pay attention to the stock market, since it's even further removed from reality than the fifth estate.

HiTech doom and gloom? Slowing momentum? Lousy prospects for a job?

Not quite.

While the media seems to be reporting with much enthusiasm on the sorry state of e-biz affairs, the reality is that the world of HiTech moves along, new technologies are invented, code is developed, businesses are built and applications are implemented.

Investors continue their wild and crazy ways while some guy or gal in a photonics lab somewhere is figuring out how to get another yottabit through a tiny fibre strand, a fact that will revolutionize our life 10 years out. While average users scream at their computer when it crashes, someone somewhere is coding a better error routine. Maybe.

So, while the media has its fun with the news angle of the day, and investors continue their insane activities, average folk continue to be mystified by the world around them, because the fact is so far removed from the reality.

The fact is, we've got a huge and vibrant HiTech industry: plenty of jobs, massive opportunity, lots of money yet to be made. HiTech and IT spending continues to be a huge aspect of our economy, and will only increase over time.

Things aren't really that bad. What should you do? First off, if you're a young person working in HiTech, you better call your mom. She's probably watching the news and is convinced that your job, your career and your company are in peril.

But aside from that, also realize that even though we are continuing our march to a wired economy and a wired future, there are lots of people losing faith. We need to bring them back.

That's why motivating people to accept the inevitability of HiTech, e-biz and e-commerce is extremely important. Motivation is a big problem today, what with the doom and gloom surrounding us. I speak from personal experience. Right now, I'm writing my next Internet/e-biz book. And frankly, I can become quite discouraged when trying to write a book about e-biz strategies and e-biz careers when I see another talking head on CNBC telling me that the tech revolution is over.

Enough already!

To keep me going, I remind myself that while media reports on the moment, for a real perspective I've got to focus on the next five, 10 or 20 years.

Our economy is going to become wired, IP-enabled devices are going to become part of our global infrastructure, fibre optics will rule and I'll have plenty of hardware in my life.

To celebrate my attitude, I went out and bought an 800-Mhz Athlon PC with 256MB of memory and 130 gigs of disk space. Take that, you damned market analysts.

Yet, motivation seems to be in short supply. That's why I'm finding that companies, both HiTech and otherwise, are looking for ways to fire up their staff. In just the last few weeks, as a regular speaker on the conference and corporate circuit, I've found clients requesting I spin a

motivational theme into my talks. They want to ensure their staff at all levels that it's only a temporary decline, and that market conditions don't reflect reality.

We have to encourage both the IT staff and the rest of the organization to embrace the opportunity in front of us, instead of glibly dismissing it.

I'm finding that somehow I've taken on the role of being somewhat of a HiTech Billy Graham.

My message to you? You gotta keep the faith, you gotta believe and you gotta keep going.

Be with me, brothers and sisters. Amen to the HiTech revolution! «

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